

OLD TUNNEL

State Park

Old Tunnel State Park is located in Kendall County, Texas, approximately 13 miles north of Comfort, and 11 miles south of Fredericksburg. The 16.1-acre site was acquired in 1991 for the specific purpose of protection and management of a seasonal colony of approximately 1–3 million Mexican free-tailed bats. Please call (866) 978-2287 for the most current bat flight time information.

Old Tunnel SP is located along the Old San Antonio Road (from Highway 290 east of Fredericksburg), also known as the Old #9 Highway (from FM 473 north of Comfort). For more detailed directions, refer to the back of this sheet.

Old Tunnel is located within the Edwards Plateau ecological area. Erosion of limestone uplifts have created a topography of canyons, stream valleys and undulating divides. Soils are shallow and calcareous. A live oak community dominates the landscape. Other vegetation consists of shin oak, ashe juniper, greenbriar, hackberry, cedar elm, black cherry, black walnut, grape, little bluestem and frostweed. Major game and nongame species present include white-tailed deer, Rio Grande turkey, mourning dove, fox squirrel, rock squirrel, raccoon, armadillo, eastern cottontail, and a wide variety of songbirds present on a seasonal basis. Red-tailed hawks and owls prey on the bats and are often observed catching them in flight.

In 2011, Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area was transferred to the State Parks Division due to the large number of visitors to the site. Although it is now operated as a state park, the Wildlife Division will maintain some oversight in compliance with U.S. Fish and Wildlife grant stipulations. The site will still be managed with the protection and conservation of bats as a priority.

PUBLIC USE OPPORTUNITIES

Viewing the evening emergence of the bat colony from the tunnel during the months of May through October is a popular attraction at this site. There are three options available to witness the Old Tunnel's bat emergence, experience the unique history of this area, and to learn about bats and their importance to man and the environment. These options are: Upper Viewing Area Opportunities, Lower Viewing Area Opportunities, and Special Group Tours.

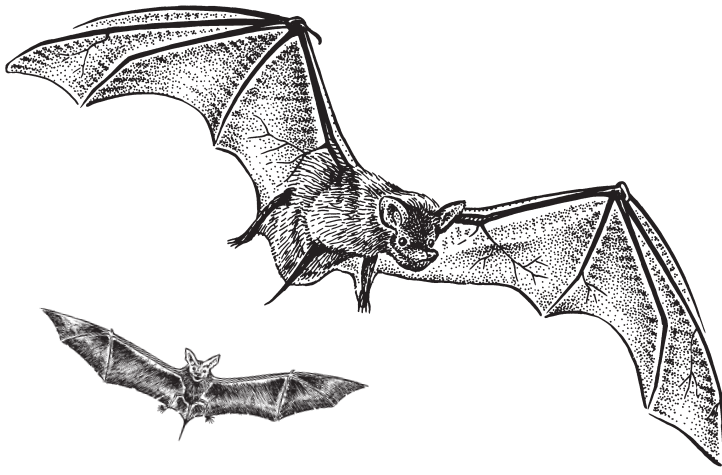
UPPER VIEWING AREA: Observation deck and bleachers are located adjacent to the parking area. Open seven nights a week for use by the general public. No fees are charged and no passports/permits are required.

LOWER VIEWING AREA: Bench seating, open Thursday through Sunday, May through October. First-come, first-served basis with a maximum seating capacity of 70 visitors. Reservations not accepted. The activity fee for the lower viewing area is \$5 per person, regardless of age. The State Parks Pass will not be accepted as this pass covers entrance fees and does not cover activity fees. Limited Public Use and Annual Public Hunting Permits will also not be accepted. Cash or check payments only. Sorry, we are not able to make change.

SPECIAL GROUP TOURS: Conducted at the Lower Viewing Area, Monday through Wednesday nights, May through October. For organized groups of up to 70 participants. Reservations required. Passports/permits not required/accepted. Group fees – Youth Groups, \$1 per person, 35 minimum required. Adult Groups – \$2 per person, 35 minimum required. To schedule a group tour, please email nyta.brown@tpwd.state.tx.us to check availability.



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GENERAL INFORMATION

TRAILS

The half-mile Old Tunnel Nature Trail is open 365 days a year from sunrise until 5:00 p.m. each evening.

CAMPING

Camping is not permitted. Camping is available at nearby Blanco State Park in Blanco, Guadalupe River State Park near Bulverde, or Enchanted Rock State Natural Area near Fredericksburg.

PICNICKING

Picnic tables are available.

HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBILITY

Two public viewing areas are handicap accessible.

RESTROOM FACILITIES

Restroom facilities are available nightly during the months of May through October.

EDUCATIONAL EXHIBITS

Educational kiosk exhibits are located at the Upper and Lower Viewing Areas with information on bats, train history and site rules and regulations.

*For additional information,
call (866) 978-BATS (2287)
or visit
www.tpwd.state.tx.us/oldtunnel*

DIRECTIONS

FROM HWY. 290 (via Fredericksburg or Johnson City): Look for the brown TxDOT highway sign that says “Old Tunnel State Park” a half-mile east of Fredericksburg city limits. Turn south here on the Old San Antonio Road and go 10.5 miles. Old Tunnel will be on the left.

FROM SAN ANTONIO:

Take IH-10 to Comfort and take Exit #523 (Hwy. 87 North). Turn left at the stop sign, which will take you underneath IH-10. Go a half mile to the stoplight (look for sign with “Old Tunnel State Park”) and turn left. Stay on FM 473, which will take you back underneath IH-10, for 5 miles. When FM 473 makes a right turn to Sisterdale, go straight ahead on the Old #9 Highway for 8 more miles. Old Tunnel will be on the right at the top of a hill.

FROM KERRVILLE:

Take IH-10 to Comfort and take Exit #523 (Hwy. 87 North). Turn right at the stop sign. Go a half mile to the stoplight (look for sign with “Old Tunnel State Park”) and turn left. Stay on FM 473, which will take you back underneath IH-10, for 5 miles. When FM 473 makes a right turn to Sisterdale, go straight ahead on the Old #9 Highway for 8 more miles. Old Tunnel will be on the right at the top of a hill.

